

<b>CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No. 8</b>
<b>15 JANUARY 2024</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

Report of:	Chris Baird, Interim Director for Education	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Ray Bisby, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services	
Contact Officer(s): Chris Baird Angela Wellings	Chris Baird, Interim Director of Education Angela Wellings, Interim Head of SEND and Inclusion	Tel. 07920 160050 07453951749

**AN OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES: PROGRESS, PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES**

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>FROM:</b> Interim Service Director for Education	<b>Deadline date:</b> N/A
It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee notes the report, makes comments and seeks clarification where appropriate.	

**1. ORIGIN OF REPORT**

1.1 Scrutiny Committee members requested an update on Special Educational Needs (SEND)

**2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT**

2.1 This report:

- Provides members with an overview of the current performance in SEND
- Highlights the challenges associated with the use of out of city provision
- Outlines progress and achievement against the Written Statement of Action (WSoA) and the Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)
- Alerts members to the Ofsted framework for joint area SEND inspections and the implications for the local area SEND partnership

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

- 1. Children’s Services including*
- a) Social Care of Children;*
  - b) Safeguarding;*
  - c) Children’s Health*

2.3 This links to the Children in Care Promise number 8, as it demonstrates how we work to ensure that all children in care with SEND are supported with the right resources to ensure that they achieve their full education potential.

### 3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
---	-----------	----------------------------------	-----

### 4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

#### 4.1 **Our strategy for SEND in Peterborough**

Peterborough has a clear vision and strategy (2019–2024) for children and young people (0-25 years) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which has been developed with partners, including children and their families as well as professionals. This strategy was developed when Peterborough was in a shared arrangement with Cambridgeshire and outlines three priority areas:

- SEND is everybody's business, where the vision for SEND is embedded in the practice of everyone who works with children and families
- Identify and respond to needs early, through joined-up early intervention
- Deliver in the right place at the right time, improving outcomes for children and young people, by making the best use of resources and ensuring high quality local support and provision

This strategy runs to 2025 and plans are now in place to review, revise, refresh and co-produce with families and partners, a new SEND strategy for Peterborough.

#### 4.2 **Information and Co-Production in Peterborough**

This is a strength in Peterborough and is particularly supported by the close relationship with Family Voice, Peterborough (FVP) the local parent/carer forum. The SEND Information Hub (Local Offer) has been considerably strengthened and provides a useful range of information for children and young people, parents and carers, early years settings, schools and colleges, provider organisations and professionals. Co-production was noted as a strength in the recent Accelerated Progress Plan

4.3 Officers attend listening events with FVP on a regular basis and offer training sessions for families on the statutory processes. Parents can either join the rolling training sessions or separate ones just for parent/carers can be arranged. Staff are attending a myth busting session on 8<sup>th</sup> January with parent/carers at the request of FVP after they alerted us to some families being 'told' that a child needs an open Early Help Assessment (EHA) to apply for an Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA).

4.4 At a strategic level, representatives from FVP attend and make major contributions to a number of key groups, including the fortnightly SEND decision-making Panel, the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Improvement group and preparation for inspection planning groups, ensuring they are involved as equal partners.

#### **Performance in SEND: Timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)**

4.5 There are currently 2,545 children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plans in Peterborough. EHCPs are issued after a rigorous multi-professional assessment and the government's clear direction is that EHCPs are for children and young people with the highest levels of need. There is a requirement in the Children and Families Act 2014, that EHCPs should be finalised within 20 weeks. As outlined in the table below, Peterborough has the highest performance across the eastern region and is significantly higher than the national average.

## Regional Data from SEN 2



		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Timeliness - Rate of EHC plans excluding exceptions issued within 20 weeks	East of England	47.5%	50.8%	60.8%	60.9%	65.0%	58.8%	65.0%	35.2%
	England	59.2%	58.6%	64.9%	60.1%	60.4%	58.0%	59.9%	50.7%
	Bedford	100.0%	100.0%	93.8%	95.5%	100.0%	100.0%	93.0%	77.5%
	Cambridgeshire	81.6%	87.5%	68.7%	61.9%	79.1%	77.6%	68.5%	41.2%
	Central								
	Bedfordshire	9.1%	42.0%	65.2%	74.6%	88.8%	61.9%	12.7%	12.0%
	Essex	10.1%	37.9%	73.6%	77.8%	74.2%	33.6%	45.9%	10.8%
	Hertfordshire	98.0%	96.0%	95.5%	96.1%	87.9%	78.7%	78.0%	32.6%
	Luton	63.9%	80.2%	87.2%	62.3%	67.2%	68.7%	65.0%	27.5%
	Norfolk	10.5%	5.6%	7.3%	14.1%	7.3%	20.5%	53.5%	75.4%
	Peterborough	62.1%	35.2%	64.5%	73.8%	65.4%	52.1%	92.9%	90.7%
	Southend-on-Sea	12.8%	11.3%	40.5%	96.1%	98.5%	93.5%	96.2%	72.5%
	Suffolk	18.2%	28.5%	47.2%	25.1%	34.6%	81.1%	89.2%	22.8%
	East of England	Thurrock	20.7%	38.0%	13.9%	52.4%	75.8%	86.1%	78.9%

4.6 This performance, which is impressive, should also be considered against a significant rise in the requests for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs), both nationally and locally. Over the past year, for example, requests for EHCNAs in Peterborough have risen by 20%, against a national average of 23%. Not all requests are transformed into EHCPs, although this figure currently stands at around 57%. In light of these increases in requests, there is an impact on capacity, which both nationally and locally is stretched. There is a proposal to increase capacity as part of budget proposals being considered for 2024/25.

#### 4.7 Annual Reviews

EHCPs should be reviewed annually, and progress has been made over the last few years, where a recovery plan was put in place to reduce a significant backlog. Between 2017- 2018, the backlog of Annual Reviews stood at 800-1,000. The recovery plan is being successfully implemented and the current backlog is now 240 (4.5% of the total number of EHCPs). Delays in updating EHCPs as a result of the annual review process are a national issue. This is also the case in Peterborough, due in part to very challenging statutory timescales. Work is being done to improve recording and monitoring systems and this is ongoing. Training continues to be delivered to partner agencies regarding their statutory role in the annual review process, reaffirming the statutory timescales involved.

4.8 Once annual review paperwork is received from schools and/or settings, checks are made as to whether amendments are needed or not, and parents are kept informed and involved in the process. There are three outcomes which may result from an annual review of an EHCP. These are: amendments can be made and the plan is updated, no amendments are needed, or recommendations may be made to cease the plan, where the young person has met their learning outcomes and/or is moving on to the next stage of either learning, training or work.

#### Specialist services to support young people with additional needs

4.9 Peterborough has a number of effective services which work collaboratively with schools and settings to provide a range of helpful strategies and in some cases, direct pupil support to improve the outcomes of children and young people with SEND. These services comprise the following:

- Educational Psychology- trading with 57 schools to provide a range of support, including consultations, assessments, coaching and staff training
- Specialist Teaching- autism and ADHD advisory service, delivering nationally accredited autism training, drop-in sessions, on-line sessions for families
- Sensory and Physical Support – training for over 800 staff and ensuring contact with new families within 2-5 days

- Early Years and Portage- home visits, community groups, guidance for parents

All services, including the Statementing and Monitoring Service (SAMS) work very hard to try to keep up with demand and provide a high-quality service. This does mean that all services are very stretched.

#### 4.10 Use of Out of City Provision

The rise in the number of EHCPs, with a corresponding rise in the number of children and young people with more complex needs can result in a difficulty around finding suitable education placements. When local schools are full, there is an increase in the use of out of city placements. This is not an ideal solution as there can be a detrimental impact on the family and the young person when they have to travel, in some cases, far from home. This removes young people from their local community and the cost of transport is increasingly high. In some cases, however, due to the complex needs of the young person, no suitable provision can be found within the city.

The total number of children and young people currently educated outside Peterborough stands at 117. The table below outlines the type of provision and the numbers of young people in each setting at a total annual cost of £3.95 million.

Out of Area Provision Type	No of Pupils	Annual Placement Costs (£)
Mainstream	7	62,467.00
Post 16	6	111,083.81
Maintained special academy	23	365,559
Independent special day	49	2,926,993.48
Independent special residential	7	519,653.46
Independent mainstream	25	478,814.00
Total	117	3,944,857.29

- 4.11 In addition to the costs of individual placements, as outlined above, there are also transport costs to consider. Of the 117 pupils mentioned in the above table, 94 are in receipt of transport. The total annual cost is £1,095,143.43, with the average cost per pupil standing at £11,775.76. This means that for 2023/24 the budget for placements is £7,214,698 and is currently projected to spend to £8,227,648. The transport budget for SEND is £4,021,587 and is projected to spend £4,965,304. Work is being undertaken to see what opportunities there might be to provide transport effectively, at reduced cost. However, there is a significant relationship with the availability of local provision. A lack of local places does impact on transport costs.

#### 4.12 Accelerated Progress Plan Update

Peterborough local area was required to put in place an Accelerated Progress Plan following Ofsted/CQC joint area SEND revisit in 2022 to determine progress from the 2019 Area SEND inspection which set out five areas of significant weakness. Four of the five areas were judged to have made sufficient progress to address the weaknesses identified. The fifth area “The provision for young people aged 18 to 25 is not sufficiently developed to make sure that young adults have the full range of opportunities and support that they need as they move through into adulthood” was judged not have made the necessary progress and subsequently an APP was put in place. This is subject to monitoring visits from the DfE and NHS England and the second visit was carried out virtually in September 2023.

- 4.13 DfE and NHS England advisors considered a range of evidence and heard from colleagues from a range of different services and organisations including Family Voice. A feedback letter was then sent to PCC and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB. It was pleasing to note the significant progress that has been made in addressing the issues identified, including the strong evidence of engagement of children and young people, families, co-production, improvement in the Local Offer – the SEND Information Hub, the breadth of education and learning opportunities, the quality of provision, the improvement in understanding of professionals. There will be a further visit in March

2024 to look at the impact of the changes that have taken place, including the transition care within health services.

#### **SEND Leadership in Peterborough**

- 4.14 As part of the decoupling from Cambridgeshire City Council, Peterborough has established a SEND Executive Board, chaired by an independent chair, Al Kingsley, CEO of NetSupport, who brings a wealth of experience and previously chaired the Cambridgeshire – Peterborough SEND Executive Board. The Board is made up of senior leaders from Family Voice, the Council (the Executive Director for Children’s Services and team), the Integrated Care Board, health provider trust, schools. The Board reports into the Children and Maternity Collaborative and is in its infancy, having met twice since September 2023.

#### **Ofsted framework for joint area SEND Inspections**

- 4.15 The new joint local area inspection, carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) focuses on the lived experiences of children with SEND and their families. There is a keen focus on partnership and co-production between all professionals, children, young people and their families to ensure that all services for those with SEND are targeted carefully to the needs of those in local area and that outcomes are improved.

#### **A summary of what they will look for:**

- 4.16 **The impact of the local area partnership’s SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND**

Inspectors will be looking at how well the local area identifies need, meets need, and prepares children and young people for next steps. They will also consider what evidence there is that children and young people with SEND and their families are involved at an individual level.

#### **How local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop SEND services**

- 4.17 This is around processes and how services needs are identified, commissioned, evaluated against impact and best outcomes. They will focus on leaders’ ambitions (at all levels), strategic working across services, commissioning, and how well leaders understand, provide for and engage with children, young people and their families to ensure. Of note is the new focus on alternative provision, attendance and links with youth justice.

#### **Preparation in Peterborough**

- 4.18 The inspection schedule is clearly laid out and means that significant planning and preparation can and is occurring beforehand. Inspectors will request key information (Annex A) which states exactly what level of detail they require. There is a schedule of which partner will collate each required dataset for the inspection and this has been shared.

The current Peterborough SEF requires updating and this is underway. The LA is also preparing readiness for Annex A which had not been put in place at the time of the decoupling.

Partners are updating the self-evaluation (SEF), and the next steps are:

- Co-produce the SEF across services and leaders. This will include those individuals and organisations who support families with SEND directly, such as Family Voice
- Deliver summary briefings for those likely to meet with inspectors so that key themes, findings and next steps are known by all
- Consider next steps for further improvement around co-production and mapping of future needs

- 4.19 Feedback from colleagues in other local areas who have already been through the Local Area SEND Inspection process indicates that inspectors are primarily focused on the lived experience of children, young people and their families. Inspectors appreciated an honest appraisal of SEND services. What is key however, is that there are clear plans for any improvements that are needed, particularly over the next 12 months.

## 5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1
1. *The Economy & Inclusive Growth*
    - *Homes and Workplaces*: Overall, the impact of this report will be neutral. The report is to give the committee and overview of key areas of SEND and Inclusion in Peterborough.
  2. *Prevention, Independence & Resilience*
    - Relates to the priority of children as it relates to the SEND services provided for children.

*Further information on the Council's Priorities can be found here - [Link to Corporate Strategy and Priorities Webpage](#)*

## 6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 N/A

## 7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 7.1 Scrutiny committee is updated on the performance of SEND services.

## 8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Scrutiny committee is asked to note the achievements of the SEND service.

## 9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no alternative options to consider as this is a report for information.

## 10. IMPLICATIONS

### **Financial Implications**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

- 10.2 The legal framework around SEND is covered by the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

### **Equalities Implications**

- 10.3 There are no equality implications arising from this report

### **Children in Care and Care Leavers**

- 10.4 This report relates to all children, including children in care and care leavers.

## 11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 N/A

## 12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 N/A